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MANAGEMENT COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

A summary of significant events of
interest to USDA management

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USDA MANAGEMENT PLAN.....The FY 77-78 USDA Management Plan has been submitted to the Office of Management and Budget as required by OMB Circular No. A-113. A special summary of the plan has also been provided. The basic areas covered in the plan are:

- Major studies, program evaluations, audits, and program reviews which are scheduled for the current or budget year;
- The management objectives which were developed in cooperation with the Management Council;
- A list of the most important objectives which are being tracked through the Management by Objectives System during the current year; and
- Significant policy, program, and management objectives developed as a part of the 1978 program and financial planning process.

Copies of the plan and summary have been sent to all Management Council representatives. Copies of the summary have been given to the Assistant Secretaries and Agency Heads. (Contact: Jim Olmes, OMF, ext. 73226)

SPACE CONSULTANT CONTRACT.....The contractor has begun surveying the area that is to be used for the prototypal space planning phase of the contract. An organizational analysis and preliminary design development are now underway. The contractor will employ the standards developed during Phase II in his planning process and intends to show how application of these standards to current open planning concepts can result in improved space utilization. (Contact: Al Cauley, 00, ext. 72815)

AUDITORS BUILDING RENOVATION.....The first phase of the renovation and restoration of the Auditors Complex is now underway. Contractors are in the process of replacing the elevators and removing "lean to" structures and the archway that formerly joined the Auditors Building to the Auditors West. GSA has advised that a contract for the design of the major renovation work will be awarded in late March of 1977. (Contact: Al Cauley, 00, ext. 72815)

OEO OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES.....The Office of Equal Opportunity has published Administrative Regulations--9 AR-- covering OEO function's and operational procedures for civil rights policy in USDA programs and activities. The AR's replace much of the policy guidance previously contained in Secretary's Memoranda in the 1662 series. In conjunction with the new administrative regulations, clarifying delegations of authority related to equal opportunity work in USDA were published in the November 23 issue of the Federal Register. (Contact: William C. Payne, OEO, ext. 74806)

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HAZARDOUS WEATHER DISMISSALS..... Recent weather in the Washington, D.C. area has generated numerous questions about early dismissals and excused absence because of snow conditions. The policy and procedures to be followed on dismissals because of hazardous weather are contained in Chapter 630, Subchapter 11-6g. of the Department Personnel Manual. Early dismissals of employees in Washington, D.C. because of hazardous weather conditions are permitted only upon notification to the Director of Personnel by the CSC Inter-Agency Advisory Board. The Director of Personnel, in turn, advises Agency Personnel Officers. (Contact: Joseph Logan, OP, ext. 77131)

CLEANUP CAMPAIGN.....As a result of agencies' cooperation in the attic and sub-basement storage cleanup campaign, many thousands of cubic feet of records have been discarded or sent to FRC. EMSC has taken the lead in releasing over 6,800 square feet of space resulting in an annual saving of over \$33,000. To date, USDA agencies have released 21,880 square feet of attic storage space resulting in an annual savings of more than \$101,000. There are still several agencies working on their areas.

The sub-basement areas have been straightened up but very little space released. This area is used primarily for excess furniture storage. Agencies are again urged to review their need for this space and to release excess furniture and space for re-allocation or disposal by OO. In addition, agencies are urged to establish a periodic review of their storage space to prevent any unnecessary accumulation of material in these areas. A lot of effort has been spent to clean up these areas, and without any follow-up procedures, these areas will again become unsafe, dirty, hazardous and costly "junk yards." (Contact: Al Cauley, OO, ext. 72815)

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION.....One out of ten USDA employees was recognized in FY 1976 through cash awards, quality increases, or honorary awards. This compares favorably with Government-wide statistics of one of every 11 recognized.

<u>Performance Recognition</u>	<u>USDA</u>	<u>Govt.</u>
Cash Awards per 100 Employees	4.4	3.5
Average Cash Award	\$243	\$228
Quality Increases per 100 Employees	3.0	3.5
Average First Year Cost (Est.)	\$496	\$518
Honorary Awards per 100 Employees	2.6	6.7

Measurable benefits from USDA employees' suggestions and special achievements totaled \$1,317,861, an average of \$318 in benefits per cash award. Most awards are based on sustained superior performance or contributions with intangible benefits. (Contact: M. T. Paulsen, OP, ext. 75618)

ENERGY CONSERVATION.....The Energy Policy and Conservation Act requires that FY 77 additions to motor vehicle fleets average at least 18 mpg. FY 77 agency acquisition plans call for the purchase of 897 passenger motor vehicles that will average 17.8 mpg. Actual mpg, however, will not be known until acquisitions begin and agency plans may have to be altered if the initial acquisitions average less than 17.5 mpg. (Contact: Bob Welch, OO, ext. 77557)

FY 78 BUDGET.....

...President's Budget - President Ford transmitted his fiscal year 1978 budget to Congress on January 17. The 1978 budget receipts are estimated to be \$393 billion. Budget outlays are estimated to be \$440 billion leaving a budget deficiency of \$47 billion. Projections of the budget for fiscal year 1979 reflect a decrease in the estimated budget deficit*to \$11.6 billion.

Spending (outlays) by the Department is expected to decrease by \$931 million in fiscal year 1978 from current estimates for fiscal year 1977 -- from \$13.7 billion to \$12.8 billion. On a budget authority basis (the authority of the government to make new financial commitments) the decrease is over \$731 million from \$13.3 billion to \$12.4 billion. The following table shows a comparison of outlays by major functional category between fiscal years 1977 and 1978:

	<u>1977</u>	<u>1978</u> (millions)	<u>Change</u>
Food Programs (Income			
Security	\$8,139	\$7,028	-\$1,111
Agriculture	2,901	2,334	-567
P.L. 480 (International Affairs)	1,091	1,094	+3
Natural Resources			
Environment and			
Energy	1,269	935	-334
All Other	292	1,370	+1,078
Total	<u>13,692</u>	<u>12,761</u>	<u>-931</u>

...Allowances - OMB issued confirmation of the 1978 budget allowances to the Department the week of January 17th. OMB guidance regarding amendments to the budget under President Carter's Administration is scheduled for issuance to the Department within a few days after the Inauguration on January 20. Materials received from OMB will be analyzed, reviewed with Secretarial officers, and distributed to the agencies as soon as possible. Immediate attention must be given to budget amendments to the President's budget which may be desired by the new administration. Program and administration officials at all levels throughout the Department offices and agencies must place high priority on key program and budget matters during the next few weeks.

...Hearing Schedules - Copies of the initial schedule for budget hearings before the House Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee have been distributed to all Administrators and budget officers. No schedule has been developed for hearings before the Senate Agriculture and Related Agencies Subcommittee at this date. (Contact: Bob Sherman, OMF, ext. 76176)

MULTI-YEAR CONTRACTING.....GAO is making a survey of the feasibility of expanded use of multi-year contracting. The survey will include both agencies that have the the authority to enter into multi-year contracts and those that do not. The survey in USDA will probably be limited to ARS because of R&D applications and the fact that they have limited multi-year authority. The ARS procurement programs are representative of other USDA agencies. (Contact: Dean Smith, 00, ext. 77527)

NATIONAL FINANCE CENTER NEWS.....

...Electronic transmission of pay tapes - Pay tapes for USDA employees in the Western U.S. are now electronically transmitted through the Forest Service San Francisco. Receipt of pay checks has been expedited by at least one day.

...Increase in volume of documents processed - A total of 7.2 million documents were processed in 1976 compared to 5.9 million in 1975; an increase of 21.5%. This means that approximately 28,000 documents per work day were processed. Here is a sampling of NFC document workload:

	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>% Increase</u>
T&A Reports	2,943,549	3,083,431	4.8
Travel Advances	51,545	72,592	40.8
Travel Vouchers	408,495	498,451	22.0
Utility Services	89,881	107,963	20.1
Telephone Services	97,204	125,342	28.9
Gasoline Credit			
Card Services	107,914	132,365	22.7

...Document turnaround time - Even with a significant volume increase and a growing shortage of computer resources, the CY 76 turnaround time for processing documents was comparable to that in CY 75. The increased turnaround time for processing utility and telephone payments resulted from changing the frequency of processing cycles from daily to 3 times weekly.

	<u>Processing Time (Days in House)</u>	
	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>
Travel Vouchers	3.52	3.51
Travel Advances	1.49	1.52
Transportation	6.75	6.28
Utilities	3.18	3.91
Telephones	3.70	4.03
Gasoline	6.99	3.96
AD 744's	5.07	4.15

EEO PROGRAM.....USDA is going to make an all-out effort in EEO during 1977. This year, as never before, the EEO mandate will be carried to every organizational level. Agencies and supervisors will be held responsible for improvement of EEO statistics to put USDA more in line with the rest of the Federal Government and with the civilian labor market. One positive effort has been the reorganization of the Department EEO Committee by the Assistant Secretary for Administration who is also the Director of EEO and serves as Chairman of the Committee. The Committee, composed of Agency EEO Coordinators, members of the Office of Personnel EEO Staff, and representatives of employee groups and unions, held its first meeting on January 19, and the general consensus was that this new EEO thrust will be a successful effort. Projects were discussed and many new initiatives will be under way within the next month. Agencies are urged to support the Committee and the EEO mandate. (Contact: Gloria F. Torres, OP, ext. 72973)